

Message Text

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PAGE 01 THESSA 00026 111915Z

61

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 DRC-01 /091 W

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R 111415Z JAN 74

FM AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1794

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

UNCLAS THESSALONIKI 0026

E.O.11652:N/A

TAGS: PINT, SGEN, SOCI, GR

SUBJECT: LOCAL REACTION TO GREEK CHURCH DEVELOPMENTS

REF: A) THESSALONIKI 0020: B) THESS 0017: C) THESS A-01

1. THESS PAPERS OF JAN 11 DOMINATED BY PROCEDURES AND PROSPECTS FOR JAN 12 ELECTION OF NEW GREEK ARCHBISHOP. "ELLINIKOS VORRAS" IDENTIFIES SERAFIM OF IOANNINA, IACOVOS OF MYTILINI, DIONYSIOS OF KOZANI, AND BARNABAS OF KITROS (KATERINI: REF C) AS LEADING CANDIDATES WITH FORMER AS LIKELY CHOICE. REPORTS LARGELY BASED ON ATHENS PRESS EXCEPT FOR ALLEGED DENIAL OF CANDIDACY BY METROPOLITANS BARNABAS AND DIONYSIOS, FURTHER CRITICISM OF MIN ED CHRISTOU BY THESS METROPOLITAN LEONIDAS (REF A), AND SPECULATION ON POSSIBLE REHABILITATION OF FORMER THESS METROPOLITAN PANTELEIMON.

2. BOTH PAPERS QUOTE STATEMENT PREVIOUS DAY BY BARNABAS OF KITROS (KATERINI) THAT "HE DOES NOT DESIRE TO BE CANDIDATE FOR POSITION OF ARCHBISHOP AT PRESENT TIME". ACCORDING TO "UNCONFIRMED INFORMATION", METROPOLITAN DIONYSIOS OF KOZANI ALSO "DOES NOT INTEND" TO SUPPORT HIS OWN CANDIDACY. (BOTH ARE ELIGIBLE MEMBERS OF SPECIAL SYNOD).

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3. "VORRAS" REPORTS THAT THESS METROPOLITAN LEONIDAS

HAS NOT YET RECEIVED REPLY TO LETTER OF JAN 9 TO
MIN ED CHRISTOU COVERING OBJECTIONS CONTAINED REF A,
AND DEMANDING APOLOGY FOR MIN ED STATEMENT THAT HIS
RELATIONS WITH ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH STRAINED. PAPER
ALSO REPORTS THAT LEONIDAS NOW UNDER ATTACK BY GROUPS
WHO MAINTAIN THAT DISMISSAL OF EX-METROPOLITAN
PANTELEIMON "IMPROPER", AND WHO VIEW LEONIDAS AS
"PROTAGONIST OF IERONYMOS REGIME AND OF POLITICAL
ESTABLISHMENT RECENTLY OVERTHROWN BY ARMED FORCES".

4. "VORRAS" HEADLINE REPORTS "MOVEMENT FOR RETURN OF
PANTELEIMON TO THRONE OF THESSALONIKI". TEXT NOTES THAT
LOCAL OPPONENTS OF LEONIDAS, APPARENTLY INCLUDING
PATRISTIC STUDIES INSTITUTE DIRECTED BY MIN ED CHRISTOU
(REF B), ARE WORKING FOR PANTELEIMON' S REHABILITATION.
AS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED, LATTER HAS CONTINUED TO MAINTAIN
THAT HIS DISMISSAL FOLLOWING 1967 COUP WAS ILLEGAL AND THAT
HE IS STILL RIGHTFUL THESSALONIKI METROPOLITAN.
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